

Message Text

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SUBJ: JAPANESE REACTION TOSENTENCING OF KIM DAE JUNG

SUMMARY. SENTENCING OF KIM DAE JUNG AND OTHER SOUTH KOREAN DISSIDENTS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE IN TOKYO PRESS. JAPANESE OPPOSITION PARTIES AND ANTI-PARK GROUPS PREDICTABLY CONDEMNED SOUTH KOREAN REGIME. FONOFF DECLINED SPECIFIC COMMENT BUT NONETHELESS EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER VERDICT. INITIAL EDITORIALS INCLUDED CRITICISM OF GOJ FOR FAILURE TO ENSURE KIM'S CIVIL RIGHTS IN DIPLOMATIC SETTLEMENT OF 1973 ABDUCTION CONTROVERSY. END SUMMARY.

1. SEOUL DISTRICT COURT'S SENTENCING OF MYONGDONG DEFENDENTS RECEIVED PROMINENT FRONT-PAGE PRESS COVERAGE OVER WEEKEND. ATTENTION FOCUSED ON SEVERITY OF KIM DAE JUNG'S SENTENCE.

2. KOMEITO SPOKESMAN DEPLORED SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH KOREA AND SAID GOJ MUST BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALLOWING ROK AUTHORITIES TO PLACE KIM UNDER CUSTODY. BOTH JSP AND JCP
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CONDEMNED "FASCIST PARK REGIME" AND CHARGED GOJ

WITH "COLLUSION" IN KIM VERDICT. SIMILARLY, VARIOUS GROUPS OF KOREAN RESIDENTS IN JAPAN USED MYONGDONG SENTENCES TO CRITICIZE PARK GOVERNMENT. MINOR PROTESTS WERE HELD AT ROK EMBASSY AND ELSEWHERE IN TOKYO.

3. MAJOR PAPERS ALSO REPORTED STATEMENT OF UNIDENTIFIED FONOFF OFFICIAL THAT KIM'S ARREST AND TRIAL WERE INTERNAL AFFAIR OF ROK (THUS HEWING TO ESTABLISHED GOJ LINE THAT ABDUCTION CASE IS OFFICIALLY CLOSED). NEVERTHELESS, OFFICIAL REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED "GRAVE CONCERN" OVER SENTENCING IN LIGHT OF SEOUL PLEDGE THAT KIM WOULD MAINTAIN HIS CIVIL RIGHTS FOLLOWING DIPLOMATIC SETTLEMENT OF POLITICAL FUROR SURROUNDING HIS KIDNAPPING FROM TOKYO. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, AT TIME OF SETTLEMENT IT WAS NOT KNOWN THAT KIM WOULD BE TRIED IN FUTURE (THUS REFRAINING FROM DIRECTLY ACCUSING ROK OF RENEGING ON PLEDGE). GOJ, HE CONCLUDED, WOULD CONTINUE TO FOLLOW CLOSELY DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING KIM.

4. SHARPEST PRESS COMMENTARY APPEARED IN AUGUST 29 YOMIURI EDITORIAL ENTITLED (ZKIM DAE JUNG BETRAYED." EDITORIAL CHARGED THAT GOJ'S "POLITICAL SOLUTION" OF ORIGINAL KIM ABDUCTION HAD FAILED TO SAFEGUARD KIM'S RIGHTS AND INSTEAD, HAD BROUGHT ABOUT RESUMPTION OF JAPANESE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ROK. EDITORIAL STATED" "PEOPLE STRONGLY SUSPECT THAT BEHIND THE "POLITICAL SOLUTION" OF THE KIM DAE JUNG CASE LIES THE TIES BETWEEN POLITICAL AND BUSINESS LEADERS OF JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA. THIS SUSPICION IS STRENGTHENED BY DISCLOSURES IN THE LOCKHEED CASE." YOMIURI CONCLUDED ROK WAS "REGRETABLY" USING PANMUNJOM INCIDENT AS EXCUSE TO TIGHTEN CONTROL OVER ITS PEOPLE.

5. ASAHI EDITORIAL REVIEWED BACKGROUND OF DISSIDENT ACTIVITY IN SOUTH KOREA AND CONCLUDED" "THE LATEST COURT DECISION HAS CLARIFIED THE SUBSTANCE OF SOUTH KOREA'S OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABSOLUTELY WILL NOT PERMIT CRITICISM." IN CONTRAST, MAINICHI COMMENTARY SYMPATHIZED WITH KIM, BUT NOTED" "THE MAJORITY OF SOUTH KOREANS HAVE ALREADY TURNED THEIR BACK ON THE DISSIDENTS. THE MAJORITY SEEM TO HAVE RECONCILED THEIR GOVERNMENT'S RESTRICTIVE POLICY AS A NECESSARY EVIL IN A DIVIDED NATION CONSTANTLY EXPOSED TO THE THREAT OF AGGRESSION."

6. COMMENT: DESPITE INITIAL PRESS PLAY, THUS
FAR JAPANESE RESPONSE TO MYONGDONG SENTENCES HAS BEEN
RELATIVELY RETAINED. AS ILLUSTRATED BY
TREATMENT OF PANMUNJOM INCIDENT LAST WEEK, PUBLIC
AND MEDIA REMAIN PREOCCUPIED WITH LDP LEADERSHIP
STRUGGLE. END COMMENT.
SHOESMITH

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